

This Iowa DNR Water Quality Listserv is a subscription service that you have requested. Its purpose is to deliver timely water quality technical information directly to your e-mail. This listserver is targeted to those actively engaged in regulatory activities regarding NPDES permitting, wastewater facility construction, water quality standards, flood plain permitting and wastewater operator certification. This listserver will offer regulatory news, program updates and technical guidance.

In this October 28, 2005 issue:

NPDES Kaizen One Year Report

New Domestic Wastewater NPDES Permit Application Forms

Wastewater Fees

Water Quality Standards Frequently Asked Questions

NPDES Kaizen One Year Report

A one year NPDES Kaizen report-out will be held on November 17, 2005, from 1:00 – 3:00 pm in the Wallace Building Auditorium. During the week of Sept. 27, 2004, the DNR hosted a business process improvement event for its NPDES permitting section of the Water Quality Bureau. Throughout the week-long event, a team of DNR staff and representatives from Iowa's private sector examined ways to reduce the time it takes to assess and approve submittals, and improve the overall efficiency of how paperwork is handled. Come and hear about what the DNR has been able to accomplish in the past year.

Date - November 17, 2005

Time - 1 to 3 pm

Place - Wallace Building Auditorium

New Domestic Wastewater NPDES Permit Application Forms

A new set of application forms for domestic wastewater treatment facilities went into effect on July 1, 2005. The new forms are implemented to meet U.S. EPA requirements. The new forms (Form 30) can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.iowadnr.com/water/npdes/forms2.html>. In addition, the DNR's permit writers will pre-fill the application forms with data currently in the department's database before sending renewal notices to permit holders. The permit holder is responsible for verifying the data pre-filled in the forms and completing the rest of the fields in the forms. As always, it is the permit holder's responsibility to submit completed renewal application forms with all of the required data 180 days before the current permit expires.

Wastewater Fees

The DNR has initiated a rule making process to assess fees for wastewater permits, including construction permits, NPDES permits, operation permits, and General Permit #5. The rules will cover municipal facilities, semi-public facilities, industrial facilities, and animal feeding operations. A copy of the current rule proposal can be found in the October 17, 2005, Environmental Protection Commission agenda at <http://www.iowadnr.com/epc/index.html>. Comments on the proposed rule can be sent to Angela Chen at [angela.chen@dnr.state.ia.us](mailto:angela.chen@dnr.state.ia.us) and will be accepted through December 2, 2005. In addition, the DNR intends to seek legislative approval to move the fees collected from the state general fund to a dedicated wastewater fund. This move will supplement the funding for wastewater programs delegated to the DNR by the U.S. EPA.

## Water Quality Standards Frequently Asked Questions

Water quality standards are the cornerstone for many of the DNR's water quality programs. The standards define uses for rivers, streams and lakes in determining what the level of water quality should be for each water body. Some standards are oriented toward providing a safe supply of drinking water, some are designed to protect aquatic life and wildlife, and some are to ensure safe recreational uses for the public, such as swimming. The proposed rule changes will affect only recreational and aquatic life uses.

Iowa's water quality standards are in the beginning stages of major revisions. As the standards change, some wastewater treatment facilities and industries may need to make significant changes to meet the new standards. Here are two frequently asked questions and their answers. For more information about Water Quality Standards, visit <http://www.iowadnr.com/water/standards/index.html>.

### 1. Why are these changes necessary?

The purpose of water quality standards is to protect fish and other animals that live in the stream from pollution. Also, the standards are set in order to protect people who may play in or on the water. Many of our streams currently are not protected to the extent that they should be. In addition, some of our water quality standards have become out of date and are no longer consistent with the Clean Water Act. For example:

- a) The definition of general use segments allows discharges from wastewater treatment plants to be considered as general use segments. This implies general use streams can be classified solely on their origin of flow, which is inconsistent with federal regulations 40 CFR 131.10(g)(2). Put simply, the presence of flow or pools supporting a designated use must stand alone regardless of the source of that flow or pooling.
- b) Many perennial type streams in the State of Iowa are classified as general use. This is in contrast to the definition of general use segments that states these streams are intermittent watercourses.
- c) Iowa has not shown that the use of "protected flow" in calculations for discharge limits adequately protects aquatic life uses as well as EPA-accepted critical low flows.

Assuring that the uses in our streams have the appropriate level of protection is a cornerstone for improving our water quality.

### 2. We are planning upgrades to our facility now. Because the discharge limits may change with the new standards, what should we do about the planned upgrades?

We are contacting all the facilities that have construction projects that we know about. The DNR will give each of these facilities our best guess at what the discharge limits will be if the changes to the water quality standards are approved. This can only be a guess at this point because we have not assessed the stream that your facility discharges into to determine the appropriate level of protection. This will be done after the proposed changes are approved.

After receiving the information from the DNR, the facility has an important choice to make:

- a) One option is to proceed with the upgrade project as currently planned. In this case, we will issue the construction permit for the project currently being planned but may not issue a NPDES permit until the proposed changes to the standards are approved. The facility will be allowed to discharge under the current permit even if it is expired. After the stream is assessed to determine the appropriate level of protection, the new NPDES permit will be issued. Please note that for this option, the new NPDES permit MAY require additional upgrades to meet the new standards. If necessary, the new NPDES permit will contain a compliance schedule giving the facility a reasonable amount of time to complete the new upgrades and comply with the new limits.
- b) Another option is to wait until the proposed standards are approved and the stream is assessed to determine the appropriate level of protection. Next, the new discharge limits can be determined and then the project can proceed as is or be amended to meet the new discharge limits. If your facility is currently under an order from the DNR to upgrade in order to meet your current limits, this option may not be available to you. Check with the DNR Field Office to be sure.

#### Relevant Links

For more information on Iowa DNR water quality programs, please visit the following address:  
<http://www.iowadnr.com/water/index.html>.